



## News Release

**For Immediate Release:**

Thursday, March 22, 2007

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### **More S.L. County Residents to Get Critical Dental Care**

*UDOH Partners with Granite School District to Open New Clinic*

(Salt Lake City, UT) – A unique partnership will mean thousands more low-income Salt Lake County residents will be able to see a dentist. The Utah Department of Health (UDOH) Family Dental Plan and the Granite Technical Institute (GTI) will host an open house at a new clinic, housed in the GTI headquarters at 2500 South State Street.

The twist is that the health department is providing the dentists and office staff, while GTI is providing the clinic space, including four exam and treatment rooms, and many of the dental assistants – all of whom are juniors and seniors from Granite District high schools. Those involved say it's a groundbreaking enterprise.

“This partnership has been a dream of mine for 21 years,” said Carma Varas, GTI's dental assisting instructor since 1986. “Until now, the students have had to practice their skills on one another,” said Varas. “Now they'll be working with real patients who have real problems and will be much better prepared when they head out into the workforce.”

“It's a great collaboration that benefits everyone,” said Bruce Murray of UDOH. “The clinic staff will see about 275 clients a month from state programs like Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program and the Primary Care Network,” he said. “So, in addition to practicing their treatment skills, they students will learn how to navigate these critical assistance programs, including processing claims.”

The most common services provided at the clinic are checkups, x-rays, and cleanings, as well as fluoride treatments, sealants, fillings, root canals, extractions and dentures. Staff also perform hundreds of dental screenings for children in Head Start programs.

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The public is invited to an open house from noon to 8:00 p.m. Thursday, March 22. The clinic is located in Suite 404 of the Granite Technical Institute at 2500 South State Street. During those hours, staff will provide free dental screenings for potential patients, and will perform Head Start screenings for local preschoolers from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. The media are invited from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.

To accommodate working clients with busy schedules, the Granite clinic is open Monday through Thursday from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Appointments can be scheduled by calling 801-646-4377.

The Granite location is the newest of seven clinics operated by Family Dental Plan. The six others are in Ogden, Layton, Provo, Salt Lake City, St. George and West Valley City. Family Dental Plan also operates a mobile clinic in harder-to-reach rural areas of the state. Some of the sites served in 2006 included Ibapah, Enterprise, Eureka, Blanding and Junction/Circleville.

For more information contact Bruce Murray at 801-538-7017 or Carma Varas at 801-646-4350.

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*The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.*

